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Conquering Gender Stereotypes One Football at a Time

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Conquering Gender Stereotypes One Football at a Time

Rani Bezanson

Undergraduate Research Symposium, 2018

Outline

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Why I Chose This Topic?

- Passion for sports
- Personal experience as a female youth football coach
- I strive for gender equality in the field of sports
 - To break gender stereotypes
- Bring awareness to gender inequalities in sports

Sociologically Significant

- Sociology is the study of the social worlds that people create, maintain, and change through their relationships with each other (Eitzen 2009).
 - i.e. gender roles
- “Feminist theories began as critiques of the dominant social theories that did not include women or did not take women’s issues seriously” (Eitzen 2009).
 - Coverage for women is limited or omitted,
 - Women’s and men’s pro and college basketball is unequal,
 - Women are portrayed in “demeaning ways” on television, magazines, or radio shows, and
 - Commentators are “racially diverse and sex-segregated” (Eitzen 2009).

Main Questions

- Why do these gender stereotypes exist?
- When will these stereotypes diminish?

Theoretical Statement

- There is a relationship between the impact of negative stereotypes for women who are active in sports and their involvement.
 - When women face negative stereotypes they have a difficult time succeeding.

Hypothesis

- Is there a relationship between negative stereotypes in regard to women active in the sport and their involvement?

Concepts

- My two concepts are negative stereotypes and involvement.
 - Independent variable: negative stereotypes,
 - Dependent variable: less involvement of women in sports.

Research Methodology

- Descriptive Research
 - The attempt to determine, describe or identify what is
 - Bringing awareness to the current issues or problems through a process of data collection

Relevant Research

- Peer-Reviewed Journals,
- University Databases,
- Newspapers for relevant research on women in sports, and
- Personal Stories of women who are involved in sports

Literature Research

- Four Stereotypes
 1. The perceived connection between femininity and emotional inferiority or weakness
 2. Intelligence, or lack of sports knowledge
 3. Physical Weakness
 4. Male power.

1: Femininity and Emotional Inferiority or Weakness

- “The cultural traits that are transmitted continue to steer boys and girls towards sports that are associated more with masculinity or femininity” (Tuero et al 2013).
 - With the process of socialization, children are programmed to choose sports related to their gender.
- “Passive, gentle, delicate, and submissive” (Eitzen 2009).
 - Being a “tomboy” is okay, as long as traditional “femininity cues” are presented (Eitzen 2009)

Femininity and Emotional Inferiority or Weakness (continued)

- Professional women's sports associations are precisely gendered, whereas men's sports are "unmarked" (Travers 2008)
 - Ladies Professional Golf Association vs Professional Golf Association
 - Women's National Basketball Association vs National Basketball Association
- 2015 Super Bowl commercial - #LikeAGirl
 - Portrays girls as being too soft, weak, and fragile

Femininity and Emotional Inferiority or Weakness (continued)

- Female coaches tend to take things more personal and male coaches just kind of like deal with things. Like if there's trouble on the team, they deal with it and get it over with. And I just feel like female coaches make it more of an issue just cause I guess females in general are more emotional and stuff. (2005)

2: Intelligence, or Lack of Sport Knowledge

- Andy Rooney stated, “The only thing that really bugs me about television’s coverage is those damn women they have down on the sidelines who don’t know what the hell they’re talking about” (Coventry 2004).
- Cam Newton, Quarterback of the Carolina Panthers.
 - Jourdan Rodrigue
- “Sex/gender roles in sport have resulted almost entirely from stereotypes rather than from analytical thinking” (Katz and Luckinbill 2017).

3: Physical Weakness

- Role encapsulation is when men and women do a job that is targeted to their gender (Drago et al 2005).
- “Physicality is also revered in contact sports, with other skills and strategy being overshadowed by “big hits,” strength, and power (Carter 2014).
 - For example, women’s hockey is a game that emphasizes on “speed, finesse, and play making,” whereas men’s hockey is more physical and aggressive, with also focusing on force and intimidation” (2014).

4: Male Power

- “Student athletes felt that male coaches were more successful in commanding the respect of players by the inherent power of their authority as men, and because they tended to have an authoritarian style of coaching” (Drago et al. 2005).
- “Sport from a feminist theoretical perspective is seen as a gendered activity in which males have the power” (Eitzen 2009).
 - Affects recruitment and hiring practices across multiple businesses (Harris 2012)
 - Men are usually physically stronger than women, which is evident in sports (Harris 2012)

Male Power (continued)

- Pay inequity between women and men
- Opportunities for women to play professional sports do exist, however there is inequality in the “common condition” (2008).
 - “Ladies Professional Golf Association winnings fall considerably below (men’s) Professional Golf Association winnings;
- In the 2006/2007-basketball season, National Basketball Association players receive a base salary of \$427,163, while Women’s National Basketball Association receive a base salary of \$30,000 (rookies), and \$42,000 (veterans).

Summary and Findings

- For everyone, especially men, to advocate for women
 - Publically announcing that they support female athletes
 - Helping them attain equal pay,
 - Giving them the same opportunities as men
- Remove already existing gender stereotypes by describing athletic tasks as gender-neutral” (Hively and Alayli 49).
 - Allowing women to play stereotypically male sports roles, such as a football quarterback

Recommendations From Michele Tafoya

- Work on not internalizing negative stereotypes,
 - Advocate for yourself, and
- Make your qualifications based on your character and knowledge (2018).

Further Suggestions and Final Thoughts

- Participating in male-dominated sports should not be based on gender
 - Work is still needed to be done
- Jourdan Rodrigue is proving that the cultural landscape of sports in America is evolving for the better

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